

for itself imperishable records in the annals of mankind. The remains of Nineveh, now being opened to us, bore the same testimony. In short, the business of the builder had pervaded every clime, survived every dynasty, and weathered every revolution. We found it giving immortal grace and beauty to the open porticoes and chiselled friezes under the sunny skies of Athens; and in our northern cathedrals extinguishing the reproach attached to the name of "Gothic," and converting it into a title of distinction and of glory. But as in all preceding ages, so perhaps in our own too utilitarian age, too much thought was given to the building, and not enough to the builder. The workman was too often classed with the machinery—the crane and the pulley—and considered merely as part of the plant. It was to counteract such a tendency that the present institution had been founded. Reverses of trade and caprices of fashion often reduced honourable and deserving men to destitution, and if such were the case with the master builder, still more often was it so with the workman. This institution nobly proposed to establish pensions for unfortunate masters, and temporary assistance to distressed workmen; and, as soon as the funds would allow it, to erect an asylum for the reception of distressed brethren of the craft. The claims of their less fortunate brethren in trade, and of the workmen who had given them their active and zealous toil, would not, he was sure, be overlooked by the company around him: and with reference to the proposed asylum, he would appeal not only to them but to every class of our countrymen, not to suffer it to be said that, in the building operations of our own day, we had been content with erecting dwellings for the opulent and luxurious, with building palaces, and sometimes selling them again,—with erecting for the Legislature a pile destined, he hoped, to be transmitted amongst the memorial glories of the country,—with raising splendid temples to the Supreme Architect of the universe,—but that, in addition to all this, we had left behind us, for the impoverished builder and the workmen, a shelter for their old age, and a refuge for their hour of poverty and distress. Resting on such claims, he could safely leave the cause of the society in the hands of the assembled company, whom he called upon to drink "Prosperity to the Builders' Benevolent Institution."

Mr. Biers proposed the health of the Earl of Carlisle, to whom the society owed a debt of gratitude for the interest he had felt in its operations, and for the kind manner in which he had consented to preside on this occasion, postponing for the purpose one of the highest duties of his distinguished office. With his lordship's patronage and support, and the respectable and numerous attendance at this festival, no question could be asked as to the continuance and prosperity of the institution.

The Chairman was sure the Company would give him credit for feeling a due sense of gratitude for the cordial manner in which his health had been proposed and received. He would only say that he never felt his deficiency of knowledge in the building craft more strongly than when he had anything to do with *builders' bills*. (Laughter). He meant to use that expression in the special sense of Bills brought into Parliament relating to builders; such for instance as for amending the Metropolitan Buildings' Act. On that pregnant and intricate subject, he would only observe, that he had last night brought into the House of Lords a Bill for that purpose; not, as they would believe, in the hope that it would obtain the sanction of the legislature this year; but in order that it might be printed and circulated, and that useful suggestions might be offered upon it. He would only add that, though truly professing his ignorance of the mysteries of building, he held it to be the most brilliant part of the inheritance he had received from his ancestors, that from his earliest childhood he had been able to appreciate the masterpiece of Sir John Vanbrugh, in the house of Castle Howard; and if any architect, or other individual interested in the pursuits of the present company, should ever wish to inspect that edifice, he should be most happy to afford him every facility. His lordship concluded by proposing the health of the president, Mr.

Biers. As widely as that gentleman was known, he was thoroughly and cordially appreciated. He had especial claims upon their notice, from the zealous part he had taken in promoting the interests of the institution.

Mr. Biers returned thanks in a sensible address; and paid a well-merited tribute to Lord Dudley Stuart, for the patronage and support which his lordship had given to the society in the year 1847.

The Chairman reiterated Mr. Biers' eulogium, in proposing the next toast,—the patrons of the Institution, in connection with the name of the nobleman referred to.

Lord Dudley Stuart, in responding to the toast, rejoiced that he had been able to assist in the formation of the society. Though engaged at the time in the arduous labours of a contested election, he had been glad to turn aside from these labours, and give such aid as he could to the promoters of this society. Without being betrayed into exaggeration, or attempting to establish rivalry where there should be none, he would venture to say that, amongst numerous institutions of this description, the Builders' Benevolent Institution was one of the most deserving.

The next toast,—“The Vice-Presidents and Trustees,” was acknowledged by

Mr. W. Cubitt, M.P., who ably expressed his regret that the duty had not devolved on Mr. Stephen Bird, who had done much more for the institution than he had. Although he was himself one of the first consulted, and entered with alacrity into the project, he had been alarmed lest unreasonable expectations should be raised; and, indeed, he had rather put on the drag to prevent the society going too fast; but, referring to the rules which he then held in his hand, he was of opinion that a foundation was laid there which any builder might say was a safe one.

The Chairman briefly proposed the healths of the architects, official referees, and district-surveyors, who had honoured the institution with their countenance and the company with their presence. Though comprised in one toast, their separate merits were fully appreciated by all whom he addressed. He begged leave to couple with the toast the names of Mr. Poynter and Mr. Godwin.

Mr. Poynter briefly returned thanks. No class of persons were better acquainted with builders than architects; and no architects were better acquainted with them than those who, like himself, filled official situations; and he could say with pleasure that the more their acquaintance with the builders was extended, the more they must esteem them, in every sense in which esteem could be applied.

Mr. Godwin could not resist the opportunity, afforded by the separate mention of his name, of congratulating the company on the good position the institution had taken. Those who remembered the difficulties under which its founders laboured, the cold water which was thrown upon their endeavours, must acknowledge that these difficulties would have discouraged men of less nerve and determination than those who founded the Builders' Benevolent Institution. But these gentlemen knew what they had in view; they made up their minds to do it, and they had done it. He saw around him men more distinguished in the science and art of architecture than himself, and he could only attribute the special honour conferred on him to his connection with THE BUILDER, which might in some degree be regarded as their organ. If that were so, he considered it a high compliment, and would acknowledge that it gratified him; for when one had laboured, without favour or affection, to do one's duty, and achieve the greatest amount of good in one's small way, it was gratifying to find the exertion recognised, and it could not fail to induce further efforts. The mention of Architecture called up many feelings in the mind of one who was enthusiastically devoted to it, and who claimed for professors of it a higher consideration than they usually received. A true architect was a poet; the man who expressed a fine thought in marble, or in stone, was as much a poet, and as much entitled to applause and gratitude, as he who expressed it with the pen; and he was satisfied that this was beginning to be appreciated, and by none better than by the metropolitan builders who aided in carrying out these thoughts, and

to whose ability, enterprise, and probity, as a body, he would bear willing testimony. This was a topic on which he would willingly have a long talk; but at that late hour he must content himself with thanking the company very warmly for the honour they had done him, and congratulating them on the presence of the noble lord in the chair,—who, whether at the head of the Woods and Forests, or in the chair at a meeting to obtain a monument to Caxton,—opening a literary institution and urging the advantage of knowledge and the beauty of wisdom, or presiding at the dinner of the Builders' Benevolent Institution, was uniformly distinguished by real ability, and eloquence; and more than this,—for it was more,—beyond being an accomplished nobleman, he was an excellent, earnest, and real man.

Mr. Biers proposed the health of Mr. George Bird, the treasurer of the institution, to whom much is due.

Mr. G. Bird having replied,

The Chairman gave “The Ladies,” in order, as he said, that he might deserve the character of a “real man;” and the company separated.

In addition to the gentlemen whose names have been mentioned, we observed near us Mr. Ferrey, Mr. H. E. Kendall, Mr. Hakevill, Mr. C. Eales, Mr. S. Bird, Mr. Piper, Mr. Nesham, Mr. Tyerman, Mr. Salvin, jun., &c. The subscriptions amounted to about 500l.

LAMINATED ROOF TRUSSES.

WE have received several communications on this subject, but have not space for them in full. Mr. Hay, of Liverpool, in reply to Mr. Burnett (p. 320 *ante*) re-asserts his position:—“I repeat,” he says, “that the mode of applying bent timber in the works executed from my designs is a different application of the principle that I have nowhere seen, or heard of being used; at the same time I do admit that the ‘stretch of imagination’ is so small that I was rather surprised that Lord Lovelace viewed it of such importance as to prepare a paper upon it. From the notice of this paper in THE BUILDER I conceived it to be the same thing, and I informed the readers of THE BUILDER I had done it six years ago.”

The fact is, however, the principle has been long worked on. As another correspondent, a “Liverpool Architect,” writes, “the merit of inventing the laminated arched truss, as we usually have it, lies with M. De Saint Phar, who first suggested the idea in 1811, but it was first practically used by Colonel Emy, in roof principals, at Gironde, in France, in 1825; and then the year following, at Marac, near Bayonne, a roof of 65 feet span was constructed by the same engineer: the principals were of plank 2-inch thick, bent in courses over a mould or template, and then nailed or bolted firmly together. Also in a valuable work published by Wiley and Putnam, New York, in 1839, laminated arch ribs are shown, and not reckoned a novelty, but merely stating that the usual mode of forming them consists in making the rib of several concentric courses of timber, bent to a suitable curvature, the different courses to be firmly united together with hard wood keys and stirrups of iron.”

LAW OF CONTRACTS.

ADELPHI CHAPEL.

SIR.—The claim against the Trustees of Adelphi Chapel was for 640l. 5s.; not, as your printers say, 6,405l. You will aid largely to the benefits conferred through your publication by pointing out at times the legal difficulties of contracts so often unwisely taken. In this instance it was ambiguously stated that written orders were necessary, which we obtained from the only party a builder communicates with—“the architect”—being ourselves certain that the party mostly interested was aware of such extras being incurred. As to the certificate, the architect gave it as he considered fit, and had no other idea than that he had done so in such form as would satisfy his employers that the money was due to us, or that he should have otherwise worded it.

Aldersgate-street.

HENRY BURTON.

* The roof of the Palm House, at Loddiges's Nursery at Hackney, built about 1820, is constructed of bent planks in laminae.—See another correspondent.